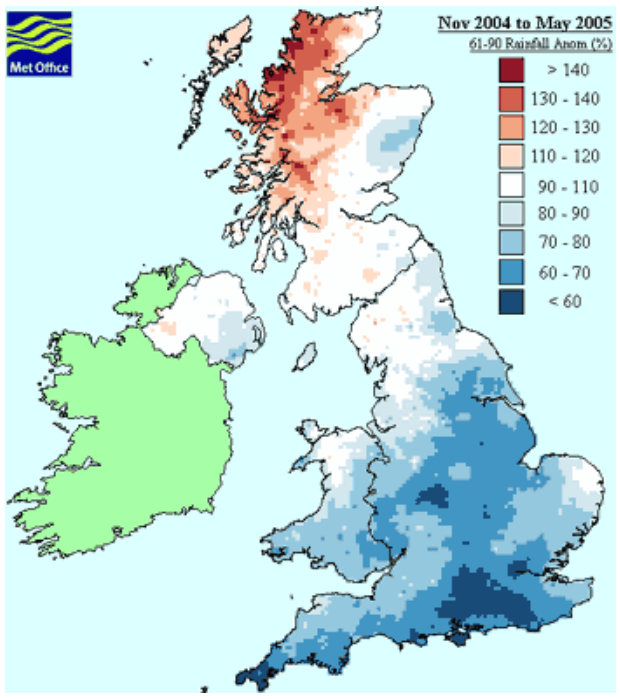
News release

May figures confirm continuing dry spell

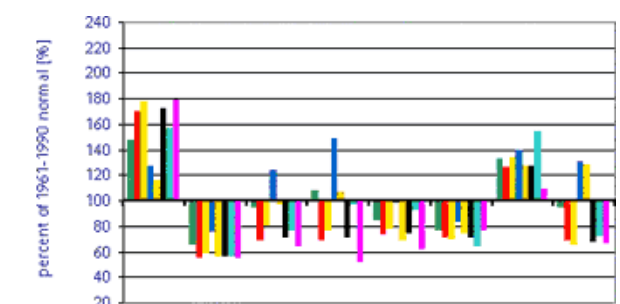
6 June 2005

New data released by the Met Office today highlights a marked variation in rainfall across the UK and shows how southern areas have had a significant lack of rainfall through six of the last seven months. The data also illustrates the challenges the country faces in getting water from where it mostly falls to where the majority of people live.



Map showing rainfall amounts as a percentage of the long-term average

Rainfall figures for the seven-month period November to May, show that most of the UK has had a dry spell now extending through two complete seasons; only during April have we seen above-average rainfall. Some parts of central and southern England have only had around 60% of their usual rain for the period.



Regional rainfall anomaly for 2004/5 (totals expressed as percentage of long-term average)

	Oct-04	Nov-04	Dec-04	Jan-05	Feb-05	Mar-05	Apr-05	May-05
UK	148	66	96	108	85	78	132	96
England	170	56	70	70	74	72	126	69
Wales	178	60	81	78	78	71	134	66
Scotland	127	77	123	148	100	84	140	130
N Ireland	116	57	98	107	70	76	127	128
Eng and Wal	172	57	72	72	75	72	127	69
England N	156	57	78	98	94	65	154	72
England S	179	56	65	53	63	77	109	67

The driest counties through the seven-month period have been Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, receiving 58% of their usual rainfall. The wettest areas, the Western Isles and Highland region of Scotland, have had 128% of their average rainfall.

Looking at individual areas shows that the period Nov 2004 - May 2005 for SE and Central Southern England was the fourth driest in the series, whereas for Northern Scotland it was the fifth wettest (the series goes back to 1914).

More about the dry spell 2004/2005

Environment Agency

Water Watch - Hydrological Summaries

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